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30 Nov. 1835

MR. SHEIL'S SPEECH

UPON

THE IRISH CHURCH,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE 23^d OF JULY, 1835.

LONDON :

HENRY HOOPER, 13, PALL-MALL EAST.

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MR. SHEIL'S SPEECH.

THE Honourable Baronet who spoke last, and who designates himself as one of the representatives of the intellect of Ireland, (intellect appears to be an item of Protestant monopoly,) contradicted in his peroration the bold assertion with which his exordium opened. At the outset he talks of those Irish Members who dissent from him, and coincide with the Government, as persons of very small account; at the conclusion, he describes their great and baneful power. The Honourable Baronet indeed, and those with whom he is in the habit of acting, have had an ample experience of the efficiency, the energy, the vigilance, and the union of that body which he affects to treat with disregard, but to which, in his arguments, he offers the acknowledgment of his involuntary respect. We are the majority; the great majority of the Irish Members. Among us are men of as high station, and as large possessions, as the Honourable Baronet: we speak the sentiments of the great mass of the Irish people on a question that almost exclusively, and most nearly touches the interests of Ireland. If for a series of years the majority of Scotch representatives had, upon a Scotch question, declared a strong and unvarying opinion, there are few would suggest that, to their opinions, no attention ought to be paid; and when, by the majority of Irish Members, it is insisted that justice and expediency require that a particular policy should be adopted in reference to a subject by which Ireland and her tranquillity are so immediately affected, it is strange that any individual should speak with disparagement of those by whom millions of his countrymen are represented. I have thought it right to advert to a topic on which the honourable gentleman has indulged in insinuations by which our hostility may be embittered; but our real influence never can be impaired.

The measure which the Government has brought forward, is founded upon that principle, for the adoption of which those who know Ireland best have uniformly

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contended, as affording the only basis on which a salutary system of corrective legislation can be founded. That principle is now for the first time embodied with distinctness in an Act of Parliament. Its germ was indeed to be found in the Church Temporalities' Bill, which is commonly known by the name of Stanley's Act. The noble Lord opposite, in the suspension clause, had the merit of furnishing a most valuable precedent, and indeed (although unconscious of it) laid down, in that Act, the principle upon which this Bill in a great measure rests.

Lord Stanley. No, no.

Mr. Sheil. That Bill contained a clause providing for the suspension of benefices.

Lord Stanley. For what purpose?

Mr. Sheil. I take not the will for the deed, but the deed for the will. I care little about the purpose contemplated by the noble Lord, but look to the results to which his measure must lead. He provided that, in certain cases, whole districts of country might be left without a Protestant clergyman, and that in those districts the Church should have no external visible sign. No spiritual consolation, as it is called, was to be administered to the Protestant parishioners in the localities which were to fall within the provisions of the noble Lord's celebrated measure; no opportunity for conversion was to be given to the Roman Catholic inhabitants. That Bill went much farther than the present project; because, by the latter, a Protestant traveller, whose itinerant orthodoxy chances to stand in need of spiritual aid, is to find a Protestant clergyman at hand, and bound to administer to his religious need; a stipend is to that end provided: but by the Bill of the noble Lord all trace of Protestantism was to be swept away, and unmolested Popery was to be left in complete and undisputed possession of the ground from which, and under the auspices of the noble Lord, its competitor was to be driven. It concerns the House little what object the noble Lord might have had in view: the inference from his measures is irresistible. Such premises are supplied by his expedients, as to afford an irresistible conclusion against the policy to which he still inconsistently and obstinately adheres. Did not the Right Honourable Baronet, the Member for Cumberland, on a former occasion, admit the force of these observations, when he expressed his regret that he had ever given his assent to that clause in the Church Temporalities' Bill? I wish that he were here, in order that he might give upon this sub-

ject some more satisfactory explanation than his noble confederate can furnish. On ordinary occasions it is perhaps sufficient that the noble Lord should be present, as representative of his Right Honourable friend; there is such a unity of sentiment, such a singleness of object, on the part of both those distinguished associates, that the opinions of the one always afford an adequate intimation of the views of the other; but, in the present instance, it is not unreasonable to desire that the Right Honourable Baronet should have condescended to be present. His speech was of such a character—he has assailed his opponents in terms so unqualified—that, after the delivery of a vituperative harangue, he ought to have attended the House, and encountered those to whom he had offered defiance. I own that I was anxious that the Right Honourable Baronet should be present, when to his historical references from Clarendon an answer, which he might have anticipated, is given. That Right Honourable Baronet, not satisfied with invoking the religious prejudices of the English people, has resorted to citations, of which the object appears to be to awaken a feeling of alarm in the mind of the highest personage in the realm. Was it to produce an impression at Windsor that the Right Honourable Baronet last night assigned as a cause of the fall of the monarchy, the abandonment, by Charles the First, of the interests of the Church? It is not a little amusing to hear the Right Honourable Baronet avail himself of the same expedients which were employed by Mr. Croker in his speech against Reform. To what a pass has an ex-Reformer arrived, when from Mr. Croker he borrows, without acknowledgment, the arguments employed by the literary leader of conservatism, and against the measure in which the Right Honourable Baronet and the noble Lord bore so conspicuous a part. But did he forget, when he was quoting Clarendon, and describing the steps which led Charles to the fatal window in Whitehall, that the noble Lord opposite had given of those events a very different account; and in taking Mr. Croker to task, had uttered the following striking and fervid passage? This was Lord Stanley's language on the occasion to which I refer,—“ At length, when Charles wanted to force Episcopacy upon Scotland, &c. he was forced to call together that Parliament which he had for so many years endeavoured to dispense with. But they knew him too well to put any trust in him. When he spoke of grievances, they spoke of subsidies; and when they properly refused them without better security than promises, the insincerity of which they

were convinced of, he had recourse to a prompt and abrupt dissolution, and thus added wanton insult to continued injury. He was soon again compelled to call them together. Again he thought to temporize, and again he met the same resistance; and his tyranny ended, as I hope tyranny ever will end, in base, and timid, and degrading concession." Such is the account given by the noble Lord opposite, of transactions which his colleague in the opposition has endeavoured to apply, in a manner so different, in order to awaken apprehensions, where I trust that no susceptibility of impressions so erroneous ever will be found. But in the crisis of their political fortunes, the opponents of this Bill resort to every means by which, in any quarter, excitement may be generated. Here all the opponents (the strangely combined opponents of the Government) are resolved to try their strength. No stand was made on the Corporation Bill; the Conservatives had the virtue not to resist, what they had not the courage to propose. But on the Irish Church, prejudice may be roused, fanaticism may be kindled, misrepresentation may be circulated; accordingly, round the standard of sinecurism a rally is made, and an alliance (a holy one) formed between the Conservative party (whom no one can fairly blame) and the ex-Reformers, the antagonists of their old friends, and the friends of their old antagonists—dealers in pious philippics and religious intrigue. To popular excitement, connected with the old horror of Popery, it is manifest that these united forces look; but they will find (to use a phrase of the honourable Member for Tamworth), that they mistake the echo of their own delusions for the confirmation of public opinion. Where are the petitions of the people? Have even the Cumberland yeomen stirred? We have heard of a declaration from a fanatical Scotch Synod; but from the mass of the Scotch people has any remonstrance been preferred? How did the majority of Scotch Members vote on the resolution on which this Bill is founded? No, Sir; the people of that country look to this Government with a confidence which appeals to antiquated theology cannot disturb. They see that, in the short period during which they held office, they have carried through this House one of the most important measures of Reform which has ever yet been propounded; that they have carried it without the aid of the Members for Cumberland or Lancashire—without whom it now appears possible that a Government can go on; and seeing such practical benefits already effected, they will listen with incredulity to those whose zeal for religion is not

a little heightened by their emotions as partisans. Out of the House their policy will fail; and in the House the stratagem to which they have had recourse in moving an instruction would be of little avail. The course pursued is remarkable. After the second reading they oppose the principle; and before the House goes into Committee, they criticize the details. In the last session they resisted the Tithe Bill in the second reading, although it did not include any new appropriation: this Bill, besides the appropriation clause, contains much that is condemned, and contains nothing which is approved; yet the second reading passes, not only without division, but without comment. You desire to divide the Bill into two parts: having done so, which will you select? You disapprove of the entire in its aggregate form: which of the fractions will you approve, if your instruction should be carried? There is not a principle, there is not a detail in this Bill which has not been the subject of condemnation. The men who would subtract 25% per cent. from the revenues of the clergy by the Tory Bill, (which fell stillborn, and whose authors died in political childbed,) cry out against any diminution of their incomes; and the great author of the metallic currency, who has reduced rents 50% per cent., insists that the Church ought not to be affected by the revolutions of Mark-lane. Will the great Cumberland political economist, who would have subtracted 30% per cent. from the demands of every mortgagee in the country; will he give to the opinion of the eminent transmuter of paper into gold, the benefit of his disinterested coincidence on this head? Talk, indeed, of not reducing the compositions! If there had not been any compositions, tithes would have fallen one-half. How do they stand in this country? A gentleman, a considerable proprietor in Warwickshire (whose name I shall mention to any body who desires it), told me that for his lay tithes, not very long ago, he received upwards of 2,000% a year, and that they have since fallen to 800%.

It is insisted that there will be no surplus. If there be not, no practical harm will be done to the Church; but the recognition of the principle will be a just and conciliatory tribute to the reasonable feelings of the Irish people. But how do you make out that there will be no surplus? You expatiate on the poverty of the Irish Church. Why did you always refuse a committee on the subject? It was repeatedly proposed by the honourable Member for Middlesex. You state that the revenues have been exaggerated; but what test will you employ to ascertain them? What is the

amount of the bishops' revenues? You say that they do not exceed 130,000*l.* a year; but their amount really is 150,000*l.*, as returned by the dignitaries themselves. Whether this ought to be conclusive I will not determine; but this I do know, that in calculating the net income, the bishops have deducted agents' fees and all expenses incidental to the collection of their fortunes. The income of the Archbishop of Armagh, which is now 17,000*l.* a year, will rise to 23,000*l.* a year by his own return, and ~~that~~ neither this increase nor any other is included in the 150,000*l.* It is stated that the glebe lands of Ireland are worth only 70,000*l.* a year. Even the honourable Member for Tamworth has stated that Lord Althorp has underrated the value of the glebe lands: they are 85,000 Irish acres (five Irish make eight English). Most glebes have good houses on them, and 120,000*l.* a year is not an exaggerated estimate. But why has not a return of their value been obtained? Again, on what authority is the amount of Ministers' money set forth? I come to a most important item, Ministers' money (a tax raised on every house), which illustrates the spirit of depreciation with which the wealth of the Church is reduced by its advocates. I hold a return of the amount of the property of the minor ecclesiastical corporations: it is stated, by the return, to be 57,000*l.* a year. At what sum did Lord Althorp, before that return was made, estimate this portion of the ecclesiastical possessions? At 2,000*l.* a year. But it is alleged a large portion of that sum is applicable to the reparation of cathedrals. Granted: but still is it not Church property? and is it not most unfair to exclude it from the account? Why are the surplice fees never mentioned? They are not fixed, permanent property: true;—but in estimating the means of livelihood of the clergy, we must take this detail of sustenance into consideration. Thus it is manifest that there never has been a just and full account of Church property; and if there be not, the blame lies with those who have refused committees, and never given us access to the true sources of information. I venture to say, that if to-morrow a committee was moved for on the Irish Church, it would be opposed by the Conservatives and their associates. But the real object of the opponents of the Bill in the course which they have adopted, is, by running into collateral topics, to lead away the attention of Parliament from the simple question, Whether the resolution passed deliberately by the House should be rescinded? That resolution has nothing to do with details.

It affirmed a great principle; and the Conservatives having been flung by that resolution out of power, endeavour by indirect means to nullify, and render it of no avail. But to that resolution the House would adhere; and if the Bill shall return from the Lords mutilated in that essential particular, this House will repudiate the wretched fragment. That resolution was passed without the Report. The Report gave it the strongest corroboration. It has changed the opinions of the Member for Berkshire, who made a great sacrifice of his personal feelings and his parliamentary attachments to his duty. To the leading features in the Report, and to no other, I shall refer. What has become of the three millions of Protestants, of which the Member for the University of Oxford has so often said so much? There appear to be only 852,000 Episcopal Protestants in Ireland, and even they include the Methodists, who are attached by so slender a tie to the Church; they have no episcopal ordination, no imposition of hands (I cannot understand by what medium their clergy receive the Divine Spirit). They may have the same faith, but they have not the same discipline nor the same government; and an alien priesthood will soon become a hostile one. But look to the Presbyterians. In the province of Armagh (the north of Ireland), the fortress of orthodoxy, there are upwards of 600,000 Presbyterians, and there are not 600,000 Episcopal Protestants. What inference do I draw from thence? This: that the allegation that the Church is the tie between England and Ireland is fallacious. The Presbyterians are attached to England; they are hostile to the Church (so says the moderator of the Ulster Synod, Mr. Montgomery). The conclusion is obvious: you do not need the Church treasure to supply the chest, out of which the garrison of Ireland (the Irish Protestants) are to be remunerated for their mercenary allegiance. Thus far for the North: descend to other districts. I shall take one only—the province of Tuam. What is its ecclesiastical wealth? The returns show that the episcopal revenue in that province amounts to 22,000*l.* a year, at the least. The glebe lands, prebendary revenue, and tithes amount to at least 100,000*l.*, including the first item. I believe that it is much more. This is a large sum. Now comes the question, “How many Protestants are there in the province?” There are 1,100,000 Catholics; and what will the House think?—300,000 Protestants? No. 200,000?—No. One?—No, no; only 45,000. Gracious God! 100,000*l.* a year for the “spiritual consolation” of

45,000 Protestants! This is in itself most gross; but contrast makes it monstrous. Turn from Tuam to a neighbouring country,—not France, because there is a foolish notion that the French are all infidels, and therefore no analogy can be derived from their example: turn to a country just near you, where there is great zeal in religion; a zeal which Protestants might regard as almost equivalent to fanaticism—turn to Belgium, your ally, for which you have sacrificed so much—the Catholic country with a Protestant king (we Catholics are, after all, not so very exacting)—turn to Belgium, and what state of things do you find there? Four millions of Catholics. What hierarchy suffices for that number? One archbishop and four bishops. How much money do they receive?—for that, after all, is the question—17,000*l.* a year, by which the seminaries attached to their sees, as well as their own dignities, are sustained. The Irish Primate with 23,000*l.* a year, and the whole Belgian hierarchy, and all their establishments, with only 17,000*l.*! Pass to the priesthood. Here is the Belgium budget. I have the official document. The entire church establishment of Belgium does not cost more than the sum devoted to the salvation of 45,000 Protestants in the province of Tuam; and mark—the duties of the Catholic clergy are infinitely more laborious. The practice of confession is alone sufficient to render the functions of the Catholic priest far more onerous than those of the Protestant pastor. And, with this small sum, religion thrives in Belgium (religion never dies except of pecuniary repletion); while the Protestant Church in Ireland, with all its wealth, makes in conversion no way. How much more rational it is to appeal to the example of the Belgian people than to the doctrines, the detestable doctrines, of a Belgian professor, and to try the Catholic religion by the practice of a great body of its professors, than to determine it by ponderous volumes of exploded theology, which give aliment to prejudices viler than the worms by which those tomes of virulent divinity are consumed. In Belgium the Protestant clergy are supported by grants made by a Catholic Parliament, and not only is not the allowance a narrow one, but, in consideration of the charges attendant on the Protestant pastor, he receives a larger stipend than the Roman Catholic rector. The statesmen of Exeter Hall, however, shutting out these facts, would blow the dust that covers the works of Dens into the eyes of the British people. Because there are abominable opinions in

Dens*, there are to be abominable sinecures in Ireland; because priests are charged with a disposition to propagate religion with the sword, parsons are to levy tithes with the bayonet? Are you to have your Rathcormacs, because we have had our auto-da-fés? Look, I say it again, to the Belgian Catholic Church—its tolerance, its small cost to

* Since this speech was spoken, the copy of Dens, which was in the possession of Dr. Doyle, has been put into my hands. A commentary is attached, in the hand-writing of that eminent prelate, to the passages which have excited some sensation in this country. To the question, "*An hæretici, recte puniuntur morte?*" Dens answers in the affirmative. Dr. Doyle annexes the following pithy remark to the text, "*Shockingly false.*" Dens appeals to the old Jewish law. Dr. Doyle says, "a theocracy is no rule for us." Dens lays it down, "*Infideles baptizati possunt compelli.*" Dr. Doyle observes, "*Domini non indiget auxilio hominum : non sic docuerunt Apostoli.*"

The opinions stated by Dr. Doyle in manuscript notes upon Dens, are of the same liberal and enlightened character as those which he uniformly expressed in his admirable writings. In his reply to Dr. Magee, he says, "If the person who is in error has been seduced into it by others, if he have received it as an inheritance from his fathers; and if his education, his habits, his passions, his interests, his connexions, raise a barrier about him which the light of truth cannot, morally speaking, penetrate, or the force of argument approach, still less break down; to cherish for such a person any other feeling than that of the most unmixed and ardent charity, would not only be unchristian, but inhuman; to consign such a man to future suffering on account of his error, would be an usurpation of the divine knowledge and power; and whosoever should pass judgment on him, should fear that a similar judgment without mercy would be passed upon himself."

Those who ascribe to Roman Catholics an intolerant spirit, ought to recollect that in the Protestant Church the doctrine of exclusive salvation is strenuously maintained. "Unless a man doth keep entire and inviolate the Catholic faith, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."—Athanasian Creed. The 18th article of the Thirty-Nine says, "They also are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he profeseth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature."

In the Confession of Faith of the Scotch Church, Article 17, it is laid down, that "out of the Kirk there is neither life nor eternal felicity to be hoped for: and that it is blasphemy to affirm that men who live according to equity and justice shall be saved, in whatever religion they have lived." The French Protestant Catechism holds, "that no one obtains pardon of his sins who is not incorporated with the people of God, and the unity of the Church, *out of which there is nothing but death and damnation.*"

Of the mitigation given to a tenet which is certainly no longer adopted in its rigour by the Roman Catholic Church, but is mercifully explained away by the benevolent spirit of some of its most eminent divines, an account is given with great eloquence by Lord Shrewsbury, in his "Reasons for not taking the Test."

the State, its humble and apostolic circumstance, a priesthood without wealth, a hierarchy without pomp—turn from thence to your Irish Church;—to the spirit of the Gospel, determine which is most conformable. But I may be told that I ought not to seek in a foreign country for illustration—be it so. I appeal to Scotland. The Right Honourable Baronet, the Member for Cumberland, has invited me to cross the border. He tells me that some Scotch Synod or other has interfered in Irish affairs. I stop not to inquire into their discretion; I stop not to ask whether they, whose ancestors revolted against episcopacy, and won the enjoyment of their religion with their broad swords, and established the great principle, that the Church of the minority should not live at the cost of the majority of the people, are justified in taking part with eight hundred thousand against seven millions, including 600,000 Presbyterians, who bear to the Irish Church as great a disrelish as the Roman Catholic Irish people. Putting these considerations aside, I ask this plain question, How much does the Scotch Church cost? Not certainly 300,000*l.* a year. There are nearly two millions of churchmen in Scotland; they have less than 300,000*l.* a year (I really believe less) for their spiritual wants. There are in Ireland not half the number, and three times as much money is dedicated to their salvation. If the religion of two millions of churchmen in Scotland costs so much, how much ought the religion of eight hundred thousand cost in Ireland? By what rule of proportion is that problem in church arithmetic to be solved? But it is said that each individual Scotch clergyman receives a comfortable stipend. Compare the thousands a year payable to an Irish sinecurist with the few hundreds payable to a Scotch working clergyman, and what inference will be deduced? When did this compassion for the poor Irish curates with large families arise? When to their conservative sensibilities did honourable gentlemen first begin to give way? We never heard a word against pluralities, and the wretched dependence of the lower class of the Protestant priesthood upon the gorged and pampered dignitaries of the Establishment, until the agitators, as they are called, denounced the enormous wealth of the Church, and called for retrenchment. Of new distribution not a syllable was said, until new appropriation was demanded, and it is only to escape from the one, that in the other you now seek a tardy refuge. Curates and their children might stand starving at the bishops' gates, if the opulence of the Establishment had never been assailed: it is only when that opu-

lence is held out to public condemnation that the condition of the humbler clergy is made a topic for the excitation of sympathy; and gentlemen, habitually satirical upon the rights of the people, become pathetic upon the privileges of the Church. Not contented with a reference to Scotland, the advocates of the Irish Church, speaking of the amount which ought to be paid to a Protestant clergyman without a flock, advert to the sum voluntarily paid to the Catholic priest by those thousands to whom he stands in the relation of pastor, adviser, guardian, protector, friend. You have no right to compare them. At the bed of sickness, beside the straw where agony is laid, the priest is found: from morning to night and from night to morning he is subject to the call of the meanest of his flock, and, through storm and darkness, through glens and morasses, to the expiring peasant he is bound to make his way; nor business nor pleasure ever can supply him with an excuse for an omission in his laborious and exhausting tasks; his heart, his soul, his entire existence are devoted to those whom he emphatically and tenderly calls "his people." Turn from him, and look at the sinecurist of your religion, without congregation, without employment, ministering occasionally, if at all, at a deserted altar; uttering to lonely walls the diatribes against the creed of the country, having no manner of effective occupation but that of eating his tithes and begetting others to do the same after him; and then, if you dare, draw from the livelihood paid of their accord by his parishioners to the priest, the standard by which the parson ought to be compulsorily sustained. Out of what resources, from what fund are the clergy, to whom you venture to assimilate the sinecurists of the Establishment, furnished with the means of life? One would imagine, from your comparison, that they were maintained at the national charge, by some parliamentary grant, by some sort of *regium donum*, at the least. But whence is it that these revenues, on which you expatiate, are derived? The treasury is in the nation's heart:—out of their own spontaneous liberality, unassisted by any contribution from the State, the Catholics of Ireland have maintained their Church, affording a triumph to the voluntary over the compulsory principle, proving the virtue of the priesthood, the gratitude of the country, and supplying evidence of the noble qualities that belong to the character of the Irish people. I cannot help giving way to pride when I consider what, in the midst of poverty, of circumstances the most untoward, of obstacles the most deterring, we have accomplished. There stands the

Church of the State, supported by galling imposts, with enormous episcopal revenues, with wealth exceeding that of any establishment in the world; and there beside it stands the unaided Church of the people. We maintain our priesthood in comfort, and our hierarchy in the dignified and Christian mediocrity that, between their precepts and their conduct, prevents all offensive contrast; while to our clergy, we award the stipend that becomes them—to the worship of our God we raise magnificent temples, worthy of the lofty recollections associated with our religion; the sight of which fills the traveller with admiration, delights the eye of the artist, and to the poor man's heart imparts delight and pride, in the consciousness that he has assisted the splendid edifice in its ascent by his humble contribution. And when, out of our own resources, we do all this, when paupers as we are represented to be, we have thus not only given sustinment but a just elevation to our ancient Church, how paltry it is of Protestantism, with its enormous revenues, boasting as it does that all the Aristocracy belong to it, to come here, making a poor face, and with its coffers replenished with the public gold, whining and whimpering about the wretched destitution to which it is about to be reduced. Sir, I own to you that, in considering this subject, with a view to speak upon it, I had collected a great deal of materials connected with topics which are not unfrequently introduced, such as the distinction between individual and corporate property, the old division into four parts of the Church property, and I was prepared to cite various authorities to establish a proposition, on which schoolmen might dissertate, but with which politicians have little concern. After reflecting, however, on this vast question, it struck me that the interests involved were really too important to be discussed with the subtlety of scholastic disputation or the musty pedantry of antiquarian research; and that where interests of such incalculable importance are at stake, it is our duty to discuss them upon the grounds of public expediency, or, I should rather say, of public exigency alone, in a spirit becoming men in whose hands the destinies of an empire are placed, and by whom, in such an emergency, all regards independent of public usefulness ought to be dismissed. Abandoning all metaphysical disquisitions, I proceed, not to a consideration of mere expediency, but of paramount and dire necessity; and I lay down a very plain proposition, and it is this (I do not mean it to be offensive, but, however harsh the truth, it must be told)—and it is this: Whatever may be

your inclination, you have not the ability to maintain the Irish Establishment. Why? because the power of the Irish people has risen to such a pitch, that to the mistaken interests of an impuissant minority, the rights, undoubted although not undisputed, of the enormous majority cannot any longer with impunity be sacrificed. What is the great question into which all these matters of incidental consideration really resolve themselves? The policy upon which Ireland must be governed. At first view, the subject seems to be a wretched dispute between Catholic and Protestant—a miserable sectarian controversy. It is no such thing; it is the very self-same question by which Cabinet after Cabinet has been annihilated—of which the Catholic Question was but one shape;—it is the struggle for complete political equality on the part of the overwhelming majority upon one hand, and for political ascendancy on the part of the minority upon the other. Can that ascendancy be maintained? Look at Ireland, and at the circumstances by which the existing state of things has been produced? I should be justified in going back half a century, and in tracing the growth of the popular power from its small and slender beginnings, to the elevation and the extent to which it has spread and ascended. There are men now living, who recollect the time when the great bulk of the Irish people were reduced to a state to which serfship and helotism might be justly applied. We had no property, and we could not by law acquire it; we had no intelligence, and all access to the sources of education was denied us; we were not only excluded from every political privilege, but shut out from every honourable profession. The mass of the Irish people appeared to be a dull, inert, inanimate, and almost brute heap of senseless matter; yet within it, the principles of vitality were contained. Those principles were by great events brought out. America was made free; the Irish Protestant Parliament asserted its independence; then came that resuscitation of nations through an appalling process of conjuration, the Revolution of France: but all this I pass by, and come to events much more proximate to the time, which is within the remembrance of us all. There are two men in this House, who, of the power of the Irish people, have had the most painful, the most dear-bought—I hope it will prove to be the most instructive experience—the Members for Tamworth and for Lancashire. Both entered official life as Secretaries for Ireland—both devoted themselves to ascendancy—and both became its victims. In 1813 the Member

for Tamworth was appointed Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant; and as he united great capacity with great anxiety to do good, had circumstances been less unfavourable, and had he had just laws to administer, how different would have been his government. But he was attached to a party which neutralized his talents, and frustrated his purposes. He could not go to the root of the evil; and although he now expresses a strong disrelish for ecclesiastical abuses, of that disrelish while he was in office he gave no very unequivocal evidence, and allowed sinecures (those objects of his virtuous abhorrence) to remain undisturbed. He had, indeed, no resource, except in measures of repression; the Insurrection Act was renewed, and on the 3d of June, 1814, a proclamation was issued under his auspices, to prevent the assemblages of the people. The Catholic Board was put down; not so the spirit of the people; it was only dormant; it never can be dead. It was raised again in that celebrated confederacy which embraced an entire people, and made such a display of union and of strength, that in 1825 it was deemed requisite by the Ministry, of which the Right Honourable Baronet was a Member, to suppress it. Vain and idle effort! We laughed it to scorn. We returned from London, where we had agreed to connect the Church by money with the State, provided the State should by liberty connect itself with the people. The offer was repudiated:—we invoked the Irish peasantry, who were armed with the elective franchise; those gallant, devoted, dauntless, heroic men rushed to the hustings with the courage and devotion with which Irish soldiers, led by you (pointing to Sir H. Hardinge), rushed to the breach: the holds of ascendancy were carried; the Beresfords were annihilated in Waterford; the Aristocracy was beaten to the earth in Louth: these were, however, but the preludes for the great encounter. In two years after, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, having vacated his seat as Member of the Cabinet, stood for Clare: he was opposed by the leader of the Irish people; he was discomfited; the heart of Ireland thrilled with exultation; the national sympathy became contagious; the soldiers shouted, and threw up their caps for joy upon the hills, whence they surveyed the popular ovation. Astonished by what they saw—appalled by what they anticipated, the Duke and his distinguished colleague gave way to the power of which they beheld these marvellous manifestations. But all had not been accomplished; it remained that, having won Emancipation for ourselves, we should secure Reform for you:—there was a

majority of English, and a majority of Scotch Members against Reform; it was achieved by the men whom the Irish people had poured, in a noble exercise of their privileges, into this House. "We did the State some service, and they know it;" and the first to acknowledge it was the Noble Lord, the Member for Lancashire. Strange that, with that confession upon his lips, he should not have felt deeply conscious that the power to which he had resorted as an auxiliary, might be converted into an irresistible antagonist; and that when, with that incendiary eloquence of which he is the master, he was setting the passions of England on fire,—strange, that it should never have occurred to him that we should avail ourselves of his example, and in as strong and peremptory a tone as that in which he had demanded the Reform of the Parliament, the Reform of the Church would be required. But he had a great abhorrence for rotten boroughs, while for rotten livings he entertained an equally vehement, and not very unnatural predilection. He set up as the champion of the Church, and entered into a struggle with the Irish people. It was not long before he alienated the whole Irish party, not only from himself, but from those colleagues who have since been released from the incumbrance of his co-operation, and between whom and Ireland, an honest, sincere, and permanent reconciliation, founded upon wise measures, and upon a just sense of the honourable motives from whence they have originated, has been since effected. The first proceeding, on the part of the Noble Lord, which indeed affords tolerable evidence of his genius for government, was the Stanley Arms' Bill; this even his associates scouted from the Cabinet. He then proceeded with his Church Reform, and in order to conciliate the Irish Catholics, excluded every Roman Catholic Member from the Tithe Committee. In 1831 he gave sixty thousand pounds to the clergy, and passed a Bill by which he transferred certain arrears to the Attorney-General, and commenced in the inferior courts a scene of unexampled litigation. The profuse shedding of human blood ensued. In 1832 his Tithe Bill, by which a final adjustment was to be accomplished, was produced. It was instantly denounced as pregnant with the most baneful consequences. Mark, Englishmen! mark this:—At the period when that Bill was brought forward, the Irish Catholics did not demand a reduction of tithes; there was no million then due; no sacrifice from the clergy, no sacrifice from the country, was required. All we asked, was a recognition of the principle which is at last expressed in this Bill; and if that principle had been recognized in time,

how much misfortune to the actual incumbents, how much loss to the English people, would have been saved. But the Bill was passed, in despite of reiterated admonitions, to which its projector was as insensible as the animal from which the Scriptural illustrations of deafness are derived. The people assembled to petition Parliament: their meetings were dispersed at the point of the bayonet, and the petitioners tried and incarcerated under the verdicts of juries from which Roman Catholics were excluded. The popular indignation rose to the highest point, and at the general election the standard of Repeal was planted upon every hustings. The Coercion Bill is passed—a million is given to the Irish clergy—the Church Temporalities' Bill is introduced, with a great but latent principle of improvement—the influence of the noble Lord prevails, and the 147th clause is struck out; meanwhile the clergy starve.—The session of 1834 is opened. The letter of Lord Anglesey (whose heart was full of the love of Ireland, but whose good intentions were marred by his coadjutor in the Irish Government) is produced: it calls for a new appropriation.—Mr. Ward brings his motion forward—the Church Commission is issued by Lord Grey: the noble Lord (who affects to consider Lord Grey as opposed to Irish Church Reform, when the Commission stares the noble Lord in the face) retires from office, lets go a Parthian shaft at his associates—and there he now is, facing his former friends, and in juxtaposition with his former antagonists. How far he has descended or he has risen in public estimation, I leave to his own judgment, and that of the party, of which he is the leader, which has been rapidly diminishing in numbers, and has undergone, to use the mathematical phrase of the Member for Tamworth, “a process of exhaustion.” The Government in 1834 having been relieved from the assistance of the noble Lord, brings a Tithe Bill forward, which would have given the clergy bread, and have gone a considerable way towards an adjustment of the question. It receives the approbation of a large body of the Irish representatives; it is thrown out, and the clergy are left to perish by those sinister auxiliaries who support the Church by making martyrs of its ministers;—Parliament is prorogued—Lord Melbourne is dismissed from the Cabinet with as little ceremony as a menial would be discharged from the Palace. Suddenly, and to himself, I believe, unexpectedly, the Right Honourable Baronet is raised to the Premiership; the fortunes of this great country are placed by his Sovereign in his hands; he arrives, declares himself the champion of the Church, dissolves the Parliament, strains every Treasury

nerve to 'return a Conservative House of Commons; the Parliament of his own calling meets; he is beaten on the Speakership, and does not resign; he is defeated on the Amendment, and still retains his office; he is discomfited upon the Irish Church, and he no longer considers it compatible with his dignity, his duty, or his honour, to remain in place; he surrenders the trust reposed in him by his Sovereign, and retires with disaster, but without humiliation,—for he fell in a contest with millions; he had chosen a nation for his antagonist, and it was impossible that he should not be overthrown. Far be it from me to dispute the great talents, the consummate skill, the various attributes for government, which he displayed: the greater the talents, the more consummate the skill; the more various the attributes for government of which he gave the proof, the more unquestionable the evidence of that power against which he sought to make battle, and by which he was struck down. Of that power I have traced the progress: that power vested in millions, deputed to the great majority of Irish representatives, developed, not created by Emancipation, confirmed by Reform, and which, so far from being attended with any likelihood of decrease, is accompanied by the splendid certainty of augmentation. Three millions have swollen since the Union to seven: they return the majority of the representatives of the country: they are led on by men of unalterable determination: in intelligence and in property they are making rapid advances: with Roman Catholics of high ability the Bar is crowded: by them the highest law offices are filled: they are within a step of the bench of justice: if there were no further change by the Legislature, the advance by the people would be still inevitable: the Corporation Bill (for you cannot legislate for one country on different principles from those which you apply to the other) is at hand. Can you wish, and if you wish, can you hope, that this unnatural, galling, exasperating ascendancy should be maintained? Things cannot remain as they are: it is impossible that they should retrograde:—what expedient are you prepared to adopt? Would you re-enact the penal code, let loose orangeism from its den, (is it for this that, under illustrious auspices, even into the army that confederacy has made its way?): would you drive the country into insurrection; cut down the people, avail yourselves of the most horrible instrumentality that a faction, panting for new confiscations, can supply, and bid the yeomanry draw forth the swords, clotted with the blood of 1798, that they may be brandished in massacre, and sheathed in the nation's heart?

No, no. From so horrible a conception you instinctively and virtuously recoil. But, shrinking as you do, from such a purpose, to what expedient (for I repeat the question) will you fly? Will you dissolve the Parliament? What! after you have already had recourse to that perilous expedient? You thought that you could manage the House of your own calling: you declared it at Tamworth. Have you not too deep a stake in fame, in fortune, in property, and in renown, to renew these terrible experiments? If a Conservative Parliament should be assembled, its duration must be brief, its existence will be stormy and agitated while it lasts; but if the excited people should infuse an undue proportion of the democratic element into the representation, you will have raised a spirit which you will have no spell to lay, exposed an institution more valuable than the Church to peril; and put, perhaps, what is more precious than the mitre, to a tremendous hazard—and all for what? For what are all these risks to be incurred? for what are all these appalling hazards to be run? for what stake is this awful die to be cast? For what are Cabinets after Cabinets to be dissolved, appeals after appeals to be made to the people, the public credit to be annihilated,—the Lords brought into collision with the master power of the State,—the royal prerogative, by its repeated exercise, abridged of the reverence which is due to it,—the palace shaken to its foundations, and the empire itself brought to the verge of that gulf to which, by causes of less pressure, so many countries have been irresistibly and fatally driven? For what, into all these affrighting perils are we to rush? For what, into those terrific possibilities (for likelihoods I will not call them) are we madly, desperately, impiously to plunge? For the Irish Church! the Church of the minority, long the Church of the State, never the Church of the people; the Church on which a faction fattens, by which a nation starves; the Church from which no imaginable good can flow, but evil after evil in such black and continuous abundance has been for centuries, and is to this day, poured out; the Church by which religion has been retarded, morality has been vitiated, atrocity has been engendered, which standing armies are requisite to sustain, which has cost England millions of her treasure, and Ireland torrents of her blood!

Chelmsford
30 Mar. 1835

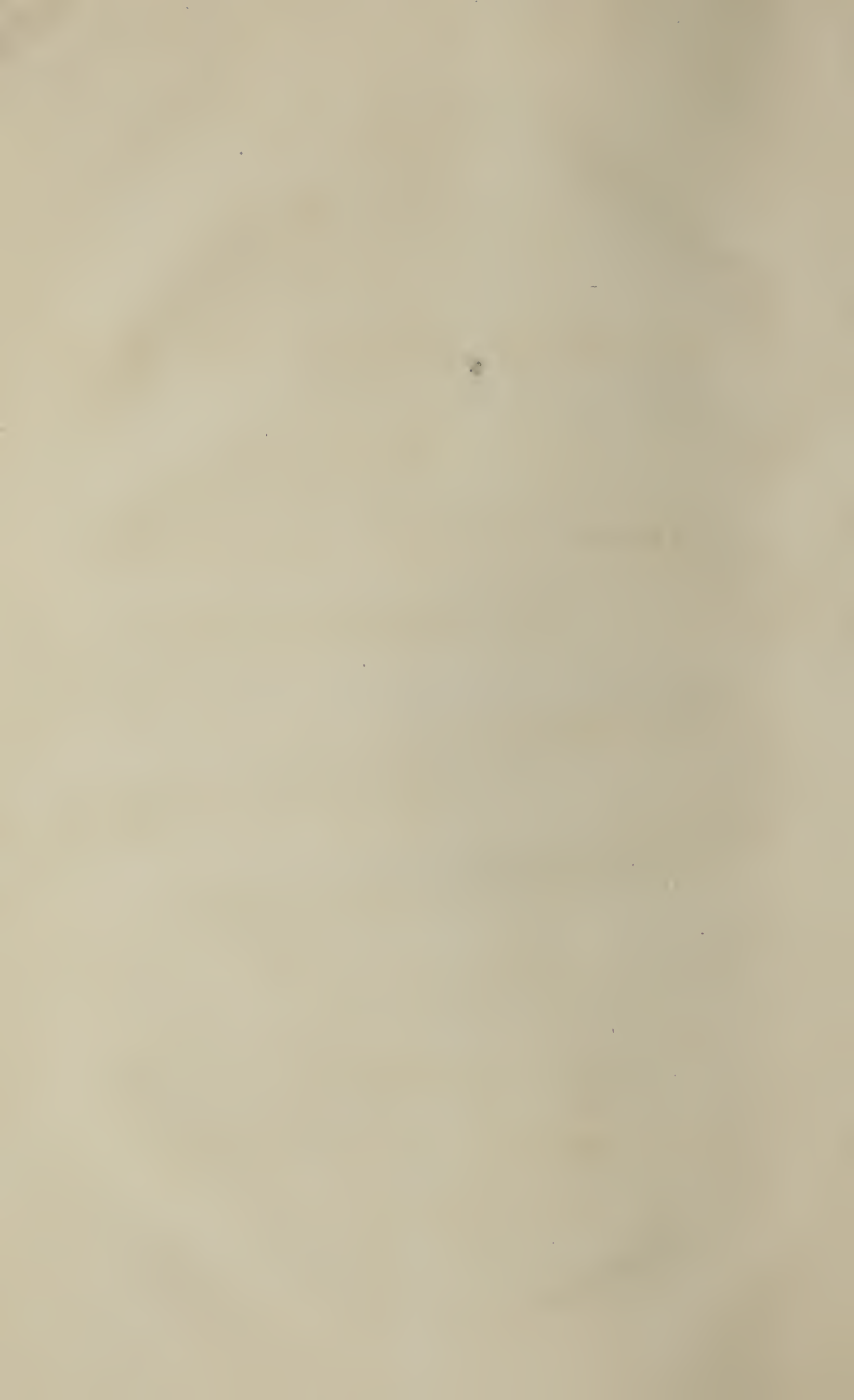
S P E E C H

OF

VISCOUNT MORPETH, M.P.

UPON THE

IRISH CHURCH QUESTION.



37

SPEECH

OF

VISCOUNT MORPETH, M. P.

UPON THE

IRISH CHURCH QUESTION,

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

JUNE 28th, 1835.

LONDON :

JAMES RIDGWAY AND SONS, PICCADILLY.

MCCCXXXV.

S P E E C H,

§c. §c.

It may well be conceded to me, in rising to bring forward a motion, professing to have for its object the Settlement of Irish Tithes, and the future regulation of the Irish Church Establishment, that to bespeak the usual, and more than usual, indulgence and forbearance of the House, is not to use mere words of course, or to preface my speech with an unmeaning common-place.—For, when I recall, and when the House remembers, in the first place, the inherent difficulties and complexities of the subject itself, the numerous experiments through which it has wandered, and the various aspects which it has, from time to time, assumed, when we consider, further, the industry, the perseverance, and the ability, which have, from so many quarters, been successively brought to bear upon it, but which, great and laudable as they have been, have all, hitherto, successively failed in accomplishing at least the main part of the object at which they all have aimed—the satisfactory and final adjustment of the question at issue ;—well may I find my present endeavour arduous, and the prospect it presents to me almost appalling.

I know, indeed, that as I have assumed the responsibility of taking the important office which I now have the honour to hold, I have almost put myself out of condition to plead that at a time when it had necessarily accumulated considerable arrears, I found myself with but very inadequate means of preparation, called upon at once to grapple with perhaps the most difficult question of State Policy that ever presented itself, and upon which I have not ever happened previously to take any material part. There is indeed one consideration that alone tends to lighten this pressure of difficulty, which I gather from all retrospect of the subject, and this is, that for the first time, it devolves upon me to suggest a solution of the Tithe Question, accompanied by the assertion of a principle based, as it seems to me, on grounds of most just policy, of most honest conciliation,—such as I believe to be almost indispensable to reconcile the parties concerned—in other words the nation at large—to the embarrassments and sacrifices which any settlement must in some degree entail. At all events, although the view which I myself take, and which I am thus the humble organ of submitting to the House on this momentous topic, cannot fail to encounter very decided—in many quarters very conscientious—in some, perhaps, very vehement, opposition ; still I may venture to hope that my very abstinence from the discussions which have marked the previous progress of the question may back my request that it should now be received with all

possible calmness and temper, and that I may allow myself to think that with all its difficulties I inherit none of its animosities.

With respect to the form of my proceeding, after the best consideration I have been able to bestow upon it, and some consultation with those whose opinions are entitled to have weight in the matter, I have felt myself warranted in moving for leave to bring in a Bill, without previously going into a Committee of the whole House.

The motion of which I have given notice, as may be collected from its terms, embraces two leading heads—the Settlement of the Tithe Question, and the future Regulation of the Irish Church Establishment. With respect, first, to the Settlement of the Tithe Question, I think that the precedents of the Tithe Composition Act, introduced in 1823, by the Right Hon. Member for the University of Cambridge, and of the Bill for the Commutation of English Tithes, introduced by Lord Althorp in 1833, are sufficient to justify me in pursuing a similar course. There are, however, one or two regulations which I shall propose ultimately to embody in the Bill, for which I must ask the sanction of a Committee of the whole House, previously to introducing them in the Committee on the Bill. With respect to the second head—the future Regulation of the Irish Church Establishment and its Revenues—I have thought that the resolutions moved in this Session by my Noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and

adopted by the House, which, with this view, have been read to-night at the table, will furnish adequate authority for the proposition which I intend to submit.

The subject has been so much and so recently before the House, that a very brief statement indeed will be sufficient to explain to Honourable Members the position which it at present occupies; as I proceed, too, to state the particulars of the measure which I am about to introduce, and thus, necessarily as it were, to put them into some sort, not so much of contrast as comparison, with the particulars of the two previous measures, the one introduced by Mr. Littleton, and, after undergoing considerable alterations, finally sent up to the House of Lords in the late Parliament; the other announced by the Right Honourable and Gallant Member for Launceston in the present, I find that, notwithstanding all that warmth of discussion and heat of feeling which have arisen, there is so much real similarity and agreement in all the propositions that come before the House, that the chief part of this branch of my subject will be pretty nearly achieved by marking such prominent points of difference as do occur while I go on. It would hardly be necessary to inform any person who had given any portion of his attention to these topics, that the Composition for Tithe in Ireland, which, under the Act of Mr. Goulburn, was voluntary, temporary, and renewable, was made, under the Act of Lord Stanley, compulsory and perpe-

tual, subject only to a periodical re-valuation ac-
cording to the price of corn. This composition is
 now complete and fixed, or, in the technical phrase,
 applotted, upon every piece of land liable to the
 payment of tithe, ecclesiastical or lay, in Ireland.
The amount of the whole composition, according
 to the latest returns which have been made out, is,
 I believe, 665,000*l.*, of which 555,000*l.* is for
Ecclesiastical, 110,000*l.* for Lay Tithe. Now the
opening proposition of this measure is that in which
both the previous measures—the Bills of both
Governments, as well as the opinion of every per-
son who has spoken, written, or thought upon the
subject, have uniformly concurred—that Compo-
sition for Tithe throughout Ireland should wholly
cease and determine. The reasons which make
 this an Act not so much of expedient as of neces-
 sary policy, are so obvious in themselves, and have
 received such copious illustration, both from all
 that has been said within these walls, and from all
 that has been done, and is doing, without them,
 that I feel it would be worse than superfluous to
 add another word on this part of the subject. But
 before we arrive at a proper provision for the
 future, there comes across us that which is not the
 least difficult and thorny branch of the whole
 matter—the chapter of arrears. What is the state
of the arrears? It will be in the recollection of
 the House that the liberality of a former Parlia-
ment granted the sum of a million pounds, subject
 to the understanding that it was to be repaid, for

payment of the Tithes due for the year 1833, and for the outstanding arrears of Tithes for the years 1832 and 1831. Of this sum I understand that about 637,000*l.* has already been advanced. But the whole million was thus appropriated to the temporary relief of the Tithe-owners, and every one who chose to apply for it received his portion, subject to a prescribed deduction. Those who did not choose to avail themselves of it were left to the ordinary legal modes of recovery ; in aid of which the use of the civil and military force was never withheld, and was sometimes applied with very unfortunate effect. The Bill sent up to the House of Lords last year allowed the yet unexpended residue of the million to meet the then remaining amount of arrears, and it enacted the repayment of the whole advances actually made under the Million Act by instalments, and on and after the 1st of Nov. 1835, for five successive years from the landlords, in addition to the yearly amount of rent charge to which, by that Bill, they were to become subject. The loss of that Bill brings a new feature into the case—the arrears of Tithe for the year 1834 ; which, I much apprehend, include a large proportion of the whole amount payable. With what provisions the Right Honourable and Gallant Member opposite was prepared to meet the arrears I am not able accurately to pronounce, as, by no fault undoubtedly of his (that responsibility rests elsewhere), he had not the opportunity of introducing his Bill. I collect from his statement that

he intended to apply the unappropriated residue of the million to the payment of the arrears of 1834 ; I do not remember or find that he took notice of any previous arrears, and he expressed his apprehension, which I believe to be too well founded in fact, that for the arrears of 1834 alone the sum in question would be greatly inadequate. The Right Honourable Gentleman also intended to remit the quinquennial instalments of the sums advanced upon the Million Act. Now with the arrears of 1831, 1832, and 1833, we do not propose to interfere. The means of relief were tendered to the acceptance of the Tithe-owners—the legal modes of recovery were at their disposal—we, therefore, think it fair to leave them to the consequences of their own option. But, at the same time, in equal fairness, we do not think ourselves warranted to interrupt any suits now pending, however desirable we must consider it ; were it in our power to remove at once, and for ever, every vestige of those ancient grounds of irritation, and collision. How then do we meet the arrears of 1834, which rest on very different grounds, inasmuch, as in the first place, no relief has been proffered, and, in the next, one branch of the Legislature had gone beyond merely talking of the extinction of Tithes, and had enacted the final determination of all Tithe Compositions? To meet the arrears then of 1834, which we subject to a deduction of 25 per cent. we find for it, that in many parts of Ireland, especially in the Northern,

and more Protestant districts, several landlords, under the provision of Stanley's Act, have of themselves voluntarily undertaken to pay to the Clergy the tithe accruing to them, subject to a bonus of 15 per cent. I believe £102,087 of the composition for Tithe have been thus undertaken for. Those Landlords so undertaking we keep to the observance of their own liability. Will it be said that we are acting unfairly towards them in giving an advantage over them to those who have not taken any step to discharge their liabilities? It is true that we wish to exempt, both prospectively and retrospectively, the occupying tenant from all future payment of tithe; but we empower the Privy Council to levy any arrears which have become due from the year 1834, from those persons who have permanent estates in the land, upon whom the liability had already, by law, devolved. We calculate the amount thus to be recovered will be between sixty and seventy thousand pounds. Hence, while in this respect we do so far connive at a non-fulfilment of legal engagements in the person of the occupying tenant, yet, in the instance of the generally wealthier, and more solvent, proprietor, (who is more likely, too, to be a Protestant) we at least give no preference to those who have not discharged their legal obligations, over those who have either obeyed, or have undertaken to obey, the Law. For any remainder of the arrears of 1834, which these provisions may fail to satisfy, we shall ask leave to

employ such portions as may be necessary of the
residue of the million ; and following the example
 of the Right Honourable and Gallant Member, we
 shall endeavour to obtain the sanction of a Com-
 mittee of the whole House for the remission of the
instalments of the sums advanced under the
Million Act. I do not pretend wholly to justify
 this course. The repayment of the sum was
 certainly promised, and, I feel assured, as certainly
 contemplated by those who proposed its advance.
 But, after what every day tends to convince me
 more and more, was the unfortunate rejection of the
 Tithe Bill of last year—after the admission made
 in the House of Lords, even before that rejection,
 by Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister, of the
 slight chance he foresaw of the sum being actually
 repaid—after the positive announcement of the
 Right Honourable and Gallant Gentleman, then
 Secretary for Ireland, that he intended to propose
 the absolute remission of the repayment, I believe
 that almost every one has begun to be convinced
 that this million has in fact long been gone past
 recovery ; that it is wholly out of the question to
recover it from, still in a great measure, I fear, a
destitute and impoverished Clergy, except by
 involving them, and co-operating with them, in
 those means of military interference, and san-
 guinary collision, which, besides all their graver
 consequences, have already signalized their fitness
 for their immediate object by levying the amount
 of 12,000*l.* at the cost of 28,000*l.* But it has

been contended by many who sit on the same side of the House with myself, that they were not prepared to consent to so large a freegift on the part of this country, to relieve the embarrassments of the Irish Clergy, or to prop up the tottering condition of the Irish Church, without receiving as an equivalent such an alteration in the appropriation of its future disposable funds, as might be more consistent with the justice of the case; more congenial with the feelings of the country; more conducive to the real object of any settlement—the maintenance of civil and religious peace. Such an altered appropriation we propose to engraft on our Bill; and on the strength of this we now come forward, and appeal to the generosity of the Representatives of the Empire at large for confirming this preliminary grant, in order that we may not only adjust the pressing exigencies of the case, but address ourselves with more facility and freedom to the remedial arrangements which follow.

Having thus dealt with all that appertains to the past, I now arrive at our proposed arrangements for the future. In common with the Bill of the Government of last year, and the proposal of the late Government of this year, we convert the present Composition for Tithe into an annual Rent Charge, payable, as in the previous cases, by the owner of the First Estate of Inheritance, or other Equivalent Estate to be defined in the Bill, equal in the present case to 7-10ths of the amount of

Composition, or £70. in every £100. The proposal of the late Government made the Rent Charge equal to 3-4ths, or £75. in the £100. I need not apologize to the Irish Landowners, at least, for the diminution. The Bill of last year made the Rent Charge equal only to 3-5ths, or £60. in the £100. ; but then it charged $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. first, on the Consolidated Fund, then on the Perpetuity Purchase Fund, and made no remission of the million. The Landlord will, of course, concede the amount of this bonus to all the intermediate tenants down to the occupier of the land. He will be entitled to recover, as so much additional rent, from the leaseholder under him, the amount, and not more than the amount, of the Rent Charge fixed upon himself. But though we make the Rent Charge payable by the Landowner £70. instead of £75. per cent. as proposed by the late Government, we do not quite mulct the existing Clerical Incumbent in the same degree ; we charge the cost of collection, which we rate at sixpence in the pound, on the Tithe-owner, inasmuch as we transfer from him all its risk and trouble. The net amount, therefore, which would naturally fall to the Tithe-owner, under the arrangement which I have stated, would be 68*l.* 5*s.* on every 100*l.* of composition. But we think that here it is allowable to make a distinction between not only the future and existing Clerical Incumbent, but also between the Lay Tithe-owner, who has no duties to perform in return, and generally has other sources of income, and the

Clergy now in possession, who have, or are assumed to have, duties exceeding all others in importance to discharge; and who are but in too many cases, from the circumstances of the few last years, reduced at this period to a state of severe distress and privation, not brought on them, still less deserved, by any demerits of their own (in most instances I believe it is quite the reverse), but by that oblique retribution which generally, sooner or later, involves in the penalties of a vicious system, even its most unoffending instruments. We therefore allow to all existing Clerical Incumbents five per cent. more on the composition, which comes to 73*l.* 5*s.* on every 100*l.* of the existing amount of composition; falling, altogether, it is true, 4*l.* 5*s.* per cent. below the Bill of last year, for the rejection of which they have not to charge the Members of the present Government, but coming up with only the trifling deduction of the cost of collection to the amount proposed by the late Government. This additional charge, temporary, not permanent like that of last year, of five per cent. not of 17½ per cent., like that of last year, we fix upon the Perpetuity Purchase Fund; of which, considering the order of men to whom it is to be applied, and the object which it is intended to serve, that of producing a Final Settlement of the Tithe Question, and thus giving repose to the Clergy and the Church, it can hardly be deemed an inappropriate or unecclesiastical use; and I rejoice to think that this view receives countenance

from the statement made by my Right Hon. and Gallant Predecessor in introducing the Tithe Bill of the late Government, inasmuch as if, during the process of the investment of the redemption money for which that Bill was to provide, any loss of interest should have been sustained, the present Incumbents were during their lives to have had the annual income of 75*l.* guaranteed to them; and this indemnification was to have been charged on the Perpetuity Purchase Fund. The two appropriations are therefore identical in principle. I am not aware that they would have been very different in amount, unless indeed that for some little time, probably, the charge on the Fund proposed by the Right Hon. Gentleman would have run much a-head of mine.

The machinery of the Bill, by which these provisions are to be carried into effect, is so nearly similar to that of last year, that it will not require any detailed notice on the present occasion. The Rent Charges are made payable to the Crown, and are put under the management of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. As far as I can collect the intention of the Right Hon. and Gallant Gentleman, he intended the Incumbent to receive the Rent Charges himself from the head landlord, and, if it should not have been paid when due, he was to apply to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who were to have recourse to a Crown process to obtain it; an arrangement which I humbly submit might tend to involve Ecclesiastical persons

and bodies in the recurrence of disputes and alterations, and in the purely secular province of the whole matter, to a far greater extent than I can think expedient or creditable. We also propose to allow under certain circumstances, a power of revision, and revaluation of the existing Tithe Compositions. I certainly should have very much desired to have closed the whole question at once ; but, upon hearing the number, as well as urgency, of the complaints that are made, some, I think, proceeding from those who yield to none in good will and friendship to the Church—many of them alleging strong instances of fact in corroboration, it did appear that it would be most difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the Irish people to any settlement that did not include some such power ; and our care must be to adopt such just and fair precautions as, on the one hand, will insure the dealing with real and solid matter of complaint, as in the case of Promissory Notes from insolvent parties, or adjudications by tribunals before which the parties did not appear ; and, on the other hand, will be a security against the revision being frivolously, capriciously, or groundlessly resorted to. After they have been once decided, the Rent Charges will, thenceforward, be only subject to variation as the compositions are now in reference to the price of corn at stated periods. The provisions of Lord Tenterden's Act for the Limitation of the Suits are likewise extended to Ireland, as in the Bill of last year.

These, then, are the principal provisions of the present Bill, as far as regards the immediate settlement of the property in Tithe, and the interests of the existing Incumbents. I recommend them to the favour of the House, not assuredly because they obviate all difficulty, and steer clear of all objection—the very nature of the question, and the actual circumstances of the time make that impossible—make every thing, we can select, a choice between the counteracting embarrassments which beset the attempt to do the utmost practicable good to all parties, with the least avoidable unfairness to any. We encounter the disadvantage, too, of running counter to that specific and favourite project which almost every one who takes an interest upon so important and extensive a subject will have been sure to set his own heart upon. One is for an entire new valuation, and general Land Tax, to which the chief objection, I conceive, is the necessary consumption of time, and the employment of a new machinery ; another, and a large party, too, I am aware, in this House, is bent on Redemption. This part of the Bill of last year, after much trial and discussion, was resisted by the late House of Commons. I do not think it would find much favour in the present ; and I cannot at all see how it could be carried into effect without a sensible additional loss to the Clergy. Still I do recommend this scheme to the House as liberal in the foremost place to the existing Clergy, to whom it remits the liability for the repayment

of a very large sum of money that has been advanced, and secures a payment for the time to come, and from and after a certain day in such year, with a running interest until discharged, subject to deduction certainly, but guaranteed to them beyond the chance of failure, and without any trouble or risk of collection—as satisfactory to the occupying tenant, from whom it removes all the vexation incident both to the payment, and, among well-disposed persons, even to the resistance of an obnoxious impost—as conducive to the real interests of the Landlord, to whom, besides all the indirect advantages that would flow from the comparative tranquillization of the country, it gives, as to the land of which he is owner, a direct bonus of 30 per cent.—as calculated to find acceptance with the great body of the nation, especially when coupled with that fairer and more equitable adjustment of Ecclesiastical Revenues, which we hope ultimately to establish, of which we here seek to lay the foundation ; and which I will now address myself to submit briefly to the notice of the House.

In approaching this part of the subject I know we must abide the double risk of shocking what I consider the untenable positions of one party, and of falling probably short of what I may also think the too high-flown expectations of another ; inasmuch, as we both deny the inviolability of Church Property, and yet are determined to maintain the existence, and add, we hope, to the efficiency of the Established Church even in Ireland. We have

to deal with a state of things there, which, in the present state of public opinion, would have precluded any sane man from dreaming to found in that country, if every thing had now to begin afresh, a Protestant Episcopal Church—yet, finding it there, with its long prescription, interwoven with so much of the every day working of our Civil Policy, we are not prepared to uproot its foundations, or destroy its framework. At the same time I feel so sensibly the anomalous and precarious ground on which it now, upon the clearest evidence, is found to rest, that of nothing am I more convinced than that, if you refuse to modify it, you will find it beyond the power of man, at least, to preserve it.

I am aware that a strong, perhaps, to some extent, a reasonable, objection is felt to the exact specification of numbers, when any result supposed likely to be acceptable to other parties, especially in a loose and turbulent state of society, would ensue upon the precise number falling short of the fixed point. We endeavour, therefore, as much as possible, to avoid the exact specification of numbers; and in the one instance where we find it necessary, if at least we are prepared to do anything towards correcting these glaring disproportions which exist in many parts of Ireland between the pay and the duties of Clerical Incumbents, we have happily the means of making the reference to numbers retrospective instead of prospective. We must fix some point below which the appointment

to the vacant Benefice is to be suspended. If we will not do this, we do nothing at all.—If we will not do this, we still determine to keep up Livings without Cures ; Clergymen without flocks ; pay without work ; the worst gains of the Sinecurist, on the worst plea of the Bigot. There is now upon the table of the House the Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, who, in pursuance of the directions given to them, have furnished a census of the Population of Ireland, specifying the respective proportions of the different religious denominations. Now I certainly cannot pretend to claim for this work, or for any work of such a nature, especially when completed within so limited a period, the merit of perfect and undeviating accuracy, but I contend that as far as the circumstances permitted, the Report has been framed in such a manner as to make it as accurate and authentic as any document of such a character could pretend to be. The House will observe that the Census of 1831 is taken as the basis of the present Census. The Census of 1831 was not framed with any expectation of its being used for the purpose of ascertaining the relative proportions of the different religious denominations in Ireland, and cannot be consequently liable to any imputation of partiality on that score. The Enumerators, by whom that Census was made, were appointed by the Magistrates for the different Counties, who were not persons likely to entertain any very violent, or subversive, views. Those Enumerators were or-

dered on this occasion to communicate with the Ministers of all religious persuasions ; the Clergy in the Established Church were especially requested to assist them, and the Ministers belonging to all the different bodies were invited to prepare distinct censuses of their own. In many instances this assistance was afforded to the Enumerators, especially, I am happy to say, by the Clergy of the Established Church, who, in some cases, visited themselves every house in their parishes. The list, which was verified on oath, was left fourteen days open for public inspection. After it had so remained open, the Commissioners visited the different parishes, and then held public sittings of enquiry, at which the Ministers of every religious persuasion were invited to attend, for the purpose of giving in their district censuses ; and every one was at liberty to tender evidence, which was taken in the face of the assembled parish. If there was likely to be any very marked inaccuracy in the enumeration of the numbers of the different denominations, it would most probably occur in the census of a large population, where some difficulty might be found in ascertaining and fixing the precise number. In the census of Belfast, for instance, which contains a population of 67,000 and odd inhabitants, and 17,000 members of the Established Church, the mistake was more likely to occur, than in the midst of a population among whom no Protestants, or but very few, were to be found ; because if, in the latter case, any Protestant had

been overlooked in the enumeration, if it had been asserted and recorded that nothing like a Protestant was in existence there, was it likely that he would abstain from coming forward, pointing out the falsity of the return, and removing the slur which he would conceive was thus attempted to be cast upon his parish. I contend, then, that this report, on the whole, is entitled to be considered as authentic and accurate, for the purposes at which it aims, as any document of such a nature can be. I will not enter, here, into any minute dissection of its contents, for which other opportunities may occur; and, for the object of a general statement, it will be sufficient to mention general results. The whole population of Ireland is stated to be 7,943,940 persons. Of this total the number of members of the Established Church is 852,664 persons; * of Presbyterians 642,356; of other Protestant Dissenters 21,808; and of Roman Catholics 6,427,712—or, putting the calculation in another form, the number of members of the Established Church is 852,064 persons, while the total number of Dissenters from the Established Church is 7,091,876 persons. The distribution of the members of the Established Church is nearly as disproportioned as their total amount. It is well known that they are to be found in the greatest numbers in the northern province of Ulster; and, not to enumerate more than one or two instances of the great disproportion that prevails in their distribution throughout Ireland, I find, adopting

heavily
8 millions
852,664
642,356
21,808
427,712

more than
eight ninths
of the total
as Dissenters from
the Est. Church

* Shiel says in his speech that the Methodists are included under this "852,664 Protestants"—

the authority of a book which, I believe, is entitled to great weight on such subjects, “Beaufort’s Ecclesiastical Map of Ireland,” that, in the Diocese of Dromore, there are 264 members of the Established Church to every thousand acres; in the Diocese of Tuam but about eight members of the Established Church to every thousand acres. In the Diocese of Clogher the members of the Establishment are as twenty-six to one hundred of the whole population; while, in the Diocese of Kilfenore, the proportion is less than one hundred. Many nearly parallel cases might be quoted. Now with what provision do we propose to meet these glaring instances of disproportion, both in the total amount, and in the relative distribution, of the members of the Established Church? We shall ask the House to give its authority for the suspension of the Presentation or Appointment to any vacant Benefice, in which it appears, upon the face of this Report, that the number of Protestants does not exceed fifty. We do not, however, even apply this limitation so strictly that if circumstances should have been materially changed in the interval, there should be no power of preventing the rigorous enforcement of the rule. The appointment is to be suspended, upon the vacancy, by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in whom we think that the superintendence of all these matters will be most properly vested; unless the Lord Lieutenant in Council should otherwise direct. But will it be

asked whether we are prepared to leave all those parishes in Ireland, in which the number of members of the Established Church does not exceed fifty, entirely without any means and opportunities of spiritual instruction, or public worship? I have never, either here or elsewhere, previously or to-night, dissembled my adherence to the principle of a Religious Establishment, and, therefore, in introducing a measure which is to regulate the future constitution of a Religious Establishment now in existence, and in endeavouring to adapt it to the state of society in which it is found, while I will not hang back, or shrink, from any limitation of its privileges, or diminution of its revenues, which seem to be prescribed by the circumstances of the case, and a sense of fairness and justice towards other parties, while I will be scared by no names of confiscation, spoliation, and sacrilege, when I think myself justified, on the plainest grounds of policy and truth, I yet cannot but derive satisfaction, as a Protestant, and a Churchman, wherever I feel that I may combine, without prejudice to the just and equal rights of all, any special mark of adherence either to the faith which I profess, or the form of Establishment to which I belong. I take then the strongest case, though by no means a solitary instance in Ireland,—I take a parish in which there is no Glebe-house, no Church, no Churchman ; and even in this spot, supposing a Member of the Established Church should come to reside there, or even a casual passer by should

chance to require the performance of a religious duty, even in this spot he shall find that the Legislature of his country has provided some one on whom he, the solitary resident, or casual stranger, may be authorized to call for the ministrations or the consolations of his religion. At the same time we do not affect to make this provision do more than just comply with the principle which leaves no foot of the State's Dominions without the pale of the State's Religion ; a principle which, I am sorry to add, is not in operation in many districts of Ireland, which do not come within the operation of this Bill. The amount of provision, however, we endeavour to proportion to the extent of service. I need not say that in such a case it would be very scanty. In a parish without Glebe-house, Church, or Churchman, we consign the care of souls, which I believe is a correct, though it sounds a contradictory, expression, to the care of the Minister of some adjoining parish, to be named by the Bishop, at an additional stipend of not more than five pounds a year.* In which case we indulgently

* “ The Ecclesiastical Commissioners are directed, in the case of the suspension of a Clerk to any Benefice, in which divine service has not been celebrated for the three years preceding the 1st February, 1833, to appoint to the Incumbent or officiating Minister of the parish adjoining such suspended Benefice, such moderate stipend as they, associated with the Bishop of the Diocese, shall think fit in consideration of the occasional Ecclesiastical duties he may have to perform in such suspended benefice.”—See Sect. 117, 3 and 4 Will. 4, chap. 37.

By the first Report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, ordered

depart from the proper rule that, where there is no duty there shall be no pay. I understand that, by the Church Temporalities Act, introduced by my noble friend the Member for North Lancashire, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were, in certain cases, empowered to assign the stipend of four pounds per annum; this was not specified distinctly in the Bill, but such a stipend has been actually assigned; so we improve in liberality as we go on. In the case where there are any Members of the Established Church—where there is but one—where there is any number below that which has occasioned the suspension of the Benefice, the care of souls is either to be committed, as in the case where there is no Member of the Establishment, to the Ministry of some adjoining Parish; or, if it should appear to the Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners that by such means adequate provision was not likely to be made for the spiritual wants of the parish, a separate curate is to be appointed, with the consent and approbation of the Lord Lieutenant in Council; and it is to be specially enacted, that wherever there is now a church, and a resident officiating Minister, there shall always be in future a separate Curate. With respect to the payment—where the Cure is put into the hands of a neigh-

to be printed by the House of Commons, 31st March, 1835, they state, that stipends varying from four to twenty-five pounds yearly have been appointed to the Incumbents or officiating Ministers of the parishes adjoining those Benefices which have been suspended under the act.

bouring Minister, the stipend, avoiding the exact specification of numbers, is to be proportioned to the duty to be performed; being in no case less than ten pounds, or more than fifty, according to the judgment of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, acting under the same approbation and consent. Where a separate Curate is appointed his salary is not to exceed seventy-five pounds; he will be permitted to occupy the Glebe-house, should there be one, if he so wishes, and undertakes to keep it in repair, and is also to have whatever portion of the Glebe-land may be thought proper, not exceeding the annual value of twenty-five pounds.* The Ecclesiastical Commissioners may let the Glebe-house, unless the Curate or officiating Minister desires to occupy it; and may also let the Glebe-lands, or such portion of them, as shall not be allotted to him. They are to pay off all charges for buildings, dilapidations, &c., on suppressed Benefices; and will, in the same manner, be entitled to receive all those dues that fall in. They are, in these respects, to hold the place of a single Clergyman who might have succeeded to the

* So that in such cases the income of the Curate arising from tithes and glebe-land will amount to one hundred pounds per annum, in a parish where the number of members of the Established Church does not exceed fifty, with the use of the Glebe-house, subject to no other charge than that of keeping it in repair,—and he will receive this stipend exclusive of any sum for any adjoining parish, the cure of which may be committed to him in case there are not more than fifty Members of the Established Church in such adjoining parish.

Living. Provision is to be made that, in every parish, where the cure of souls is committed to a neighbouring Minister, if his own church is not so situated as to afford sufficient accommodation for the members of the establishment in the annexed parish,—and also in every parish where a separate Curate is appointed, if there is no church or chapel,—a suitable place of public worship shall be built or provided; the cost being suited to the probable extent of the congregation;—if to be built, not to exceed the sum of one hundred pounds; if to be provided, or hired, not exceeding fifteen pounds per annum.* Little indeed may be thought of these places of public worship, to be provided at so modest a cost. I admit they are not such as would have suited the palmy days of Vestry Cess,—of Architectural Churches, and Parish paid Organs; yet, for the accommodation of some ten or twenty persons, in the midst of a large population who are to derive no benefit from them, I trust they may answer all the purposes

“Of such plain roofs as Piety can raise;
And only vocal to their Maker’s praise.”

It is enacted that wherever the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are about to provide for the spiritual

* Where there is no church in a suspended parish, it is intended that the School-house shall be used for the purposes of divine worship; or that a room in the Glebe-house, if any, shall be set apart for the purpose; or if neither of these accommodations can be afforded, that a place of worship be erected at a cost of one hundred pounds; or a room hired at a rent of fifteen pounds per annum.

wants of a parish, or to apply any money in building, or providing, a place of worship, the Archbishop of the Province, and the Bishop of the Diocese shall be associated with them, as Commissioners, pro hac vice. In the case which will very frequently happen, of one of these parishes, in which the number of members of the Established Church does not exceed 50, forming part of an union with other parishes, it will be enacted, that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, subject to the approbation and consent of the Lord Lieutenant in Council, are either to disunite from the union the parish in question, and deal with it as with a separate suppressed benefice under this Act; or, if they shall think fit to continue the Union, to direct that the Incumbent is to receive such part of the income of that particular parish as would have fallen to his share as a neighbouring minister or a separate curate, under the provisions which I have detailed, in case the parish had not formed part of an Union. If the Church, and Glebe house, of the Union should be in this parish, the Commissioners will be empowered to make such special provision for their use and occupation, as may seem to them most fitting. Further, upon every future vacancy of a Benefice, the annual value of which, after allowing for the deduction on the amount of Composition effected by this Bill, as well as for the tax on Benefices, proposed by the Church Temporalities' Act, shall exceed £300, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be required

to report to the Lord Lieutenant, the circumstances of such Benefice, and the extent of the Ecclesiastical duty, whereupon the Lord Lieutenant in Council will be authorized to reduce the Income in all cases when it should appear to them to exceed the requirements of the case; provided that the reduction never brings the income below £300 a year. Now, with respect to the livings at the disposal of the Crown, and the Bishops, the right will hardly be denied to Parliament, provided it seems to them to be for the good of the Country, and the Church, to deal with them at once. But it will suggest itself that Lay or Private Advowsons stand on a different footing. With what degree of violence the Honourable Member for St. Andrew's was prepared to deal with Lay Patronage in Scotland, the House was, unfortunately, prevented from fully ascertaining; but I feel it to be most desirable, in endeavouring to effect a great settlement of this nature, to shew as scrupulous a regard as possible to all claims bearing on the nature of private property, and we shall therefore introduce special provisions for enabling the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to indemnify the owners of Lay Advowsons which come under the operation of this Bill, by borrowing money, on the security of the Fund, to be established from the various sources I have mentioned. We propose to call this the Reserve Fund, and it will be applicable, in the first place, to the payment of stipends, or salaries, assigned to the Ministers or

Curates interested with the cure of souls in the suppressed Benefices,—to the payment of the charges on such parishes,—to the provision of Chapels, or places of worship, and other like purposes mentioned. After all such purposes shall have been satisfied, in just accordance, I conceive, with the Resolution of my Noble Friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, all the further sums that accrue in each year will be applied by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland to the religious and moral instruction of all classes of the People, without distinction of religious persuasion. As to the propriety of diverting the revenues of the Church to any but Ecclesiastical purposes, and the propriety of applying them to the religious and moral Education of the whole body of the people, without distinction of religious persuasion, I feel there are points which it is quite out of my present province to labour; they have been already entertained, debated, and decided, by this House; and it is in consequence of that decision that I now submit this whole measure to their consideration. I have already adverted to the objection which has been expressed in some quarters on account of apprehended peril to the safety, nay, to the lives of the existing Clerical Incumbents. I cannot, for my part, anticipate, that results so horribile could be brought about by any such ardent zeal for education, coupled with such a ruthless propensity to crime as this, in my view, rather morbid alarm

pre-supposes ; and let it be observed that, although the wants of the District from which the funds are drawn will of course be primarily and mainly consulted, nothing makes it imperative to apply them within the actual bounds of the Benefice become vacant ; and, also, this Government, and, I make no doubt, all succeeding Governments, will still be prepared to call on the liberality of Parliament not to stint or starve the objects of popular education in Ireland, during the unavoidable scantiness of means which must prevail in the infancy of our Reserve Fund, and through the lives of existing Incumbents.

But, I may be asked, as the Resolution, to which the House has agreed, states that the spiritual wants of the members of the Established Church should be fully provided for in the first instance, and as the Funds at present in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners do not by any means yet meet those Ecclesiastical purposes to which they are assigned, are we at liberty to apply any surplus which arises under this Act, to the purposes of General Education, the fund for the Ecclesiastical purposes being still inadequate? I think we are clearly so entitled. Beyond the 5 per cent on the Composition for Tithe which we charge on the Perpetuity Purchase Fund, for the benefit of the existing Clergy, and which comes under the Tithe Settlement, and not under the Appropriation Branch of this Bill, I believe we shall hardly make any trespass, beyond, at least, what we

repay, upon the funds in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. It is true they are in debt at present; it will take some time for them to redeem it; but still, eventually, they will be in possession of a surplus. With that surplus we now in no way propose to deal; we leave that to the disposal of future Parliaments, when the moment for their interference shall have arrived. We leave it just as it would have been left by the late Government; but under this Bill we propose certain fresh modifications and curtailments of which the state of the Established Church seems to us to admit; within the sphere of their operation we first do what we think necessary duly to provide for the spiritual wants of the Members of the Established Church; and it is the remaining surplus, thus created anew, which we deem ourselves at liberty to apply at once to the object designated in the resolution, the Religious and Moral Instruction of the entire Irish people.

But will it be thought that when we speak of Parishes without Churches or Churchmen, or with but tens and twenties, out of the whole population, we are but counting shadows, and making a great outcry over one or two extreme instances, and that this Reserve Fund will in fact have no feeders to supply it? I call the attention of those who are so ready to sneer at our giving only five pounds to a neighbouring Clergyman, for doing the duty in Parishes where there is no duty to be done, to the statement of the numbers of Parishes which come under the operation of this Bill :—

DIOCESES.	No. of Parishes with- out any Protestants.	Number of Parishes containing in number, Protestants, less than					Total No. of Parishes containing none or less than 50 Protestants.
		Ten.	Twenty.	Thirty.	Forty.	Fifty.	
1. Cashel	14	11	16	18	6	3	58
2. Emly	10	9	9	2	2	2	34
3. Waterford	7	3	5	nil.	1	nil.	16
4. Lismore	7	14	12	9	7	3	52
5. Limerick	9	12	13	7	5	5	51
6. Ardfert and Aghadoe	7	13	12	7	7	6	52
7. Cork	1	2	1	4	7	2	17
8. Ross	1	2	3	1	3	nil.	10
9. Cloyne	12	9	16	13	7	4	61
10. Killaloe	1	11	11	7	8	4	42
11. Kilfenora	9	2	2	1	nil.	nil.	14
12. Dublin	6	6	7	2	5	3	29
13. Kildare	4	7	10	5	7	6	39
14. Ferns	7	8	7	12	5	5	44
15. Leighlin	3	4	5	4	2	3	21
16. Ossory	17	21	11	5	10	8	72
17. Tuam	11	13	6	9	3	1	43
18. Elphin	3	10	12	5	2	2	34
19. } Clonfert and Kil-	7	6	8	5	4	3	33
20. } macduagh . .							
21. } Killala & Achonry	2	2	5	2	2	1	14
22. }							
23. Armagh	6	5	2	4	3	2	22
24. Meath	6	21	22	16	6	13	84
25. Ardagh	nil.	nil.	1	nil.	nil.	nil.	1
26. Down	nil.	nil.	nil.	1	1	nil.	2
27. Connor	1	3	2	4	4	nil.	14
28. Derry	nil.	nil.	nil.	nil.	nil.	1	1
Totals	151	194	198	133	107	77	860*

* Of parishes there are stated to be at present, in Ireland, about 2405; and of benefices, composed either of single parishes, or of unions of parishes, or parts of parishes, there are about 1385 in number;—so that although one or more parishes in an union will be suspended, still the benefice itself may continue although in a modified and reduced shape, as regards the amount of income. Of unions of parishes there are 478, which form the principal portion of the benefices affected by the contemplated provisions.

The consequence will be that the funds, which, in all these Parishes, are wholly devoted to the maintenance of what I must consider a superfluous portion of the Established Church, because it is devoted to the maintenance of sinecurists and absentees, will also in some measure be applied to the benefit of the overwhelming majority of persons belonging to other persuasions, now wholly unprovided by the State with the means of religious, or of any, Instruction; who will thus be acknowledged as entitled to share with their fellow-countrymen in that access to religious and moral Education, which a paternal Government ought not to refuse to any class of its subjects. I have also had an account made up, as far as it could be calculated, upon the amount of the Reserve Fund likely to accrue under this Bill, from the Parishes which it would affect. This account does not include any sums to be derived from the reduction of Benefices above £300. a-year in value, because as the amount of that reduction is to be discretionary, and proportionate, it would of course be hardly possible to form an estimate sufficiently exact; nor, for the same reason, does it include any sums to be derived for the letting of Glebe Houses and Glebe Lands :—

DIOCESES.	Gross Amount of Reserved Fund arising from Parishes.						Total Amount of Reserved Fund.
	In Royal or Eccle- siastical Patronage after existing in- terests.			In Lay Patronage after existing inte- rests and indemni- fication of Patrons.			
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£. s. d.
1. Cashel	5,520	10	5	nil.			
2. Emly	1,760	13	6	503	15	5	
3. Waterford	520	0	0	nil.			
4. Lismore	2,159	11	2	1,603	3	10	
5. Limerick	2,087	1	4	1,512	3	10	
6. Ardfert, &c.	1,762	19	6	1,178	10	6	
7. Cork	1,862	19	9	308	18	0	
8. Ross	464	16	2	nil.			
9. Cloyne	8,802	10	9	nil.			
10. Killaloe	1,717	0	10	1,241	0	11	
11. Kilfenora	327	11	7	51	4	11	
12. Dublin	1,013	4	9	176	12	0	
13. Kildare	1,320	3	3	45	15	7	
14. Ferns	1,925	5	5	nil.			
15. Leighlin	1,829	2	4	46	3	1	
16. Ossory	4,727	5	1	1,841	4	0	
17. Tuam	2,668	3	5	nil.			
18. Elphin	1,599	8	7	nil.			
19. } Clonfert and Kil-							
20. } macduagh	512	17	4	267	12	8	
21. } Killalla & Achonry							
22. }	800	12	10	nil.			
23. Armagh	1,003	10	7	271	0	11	
24. Meath	2,788	5	11	1,005	9	6	
25. Ardagh	16	16	4	nil.			
26. Down	56	1	3	nil.			
27. Connor	588	16	5	125	10	6	
28. Derry	63	3	1	nil.			
	47,898	11	7	10,178	5	7	58,076 17 2*
	Exclusive of Glebe Lands.						

* The principle upon which this calculation has been formed is as follows :—From the existing amounts of composition, £30. per cent. has been, in the first place, deducted as contemplated by the Bill ;—and, after allowing a sum of £5. per parish, for those parishes in which there are not any Protestants, an average stipend of £25. per parish for those in which there are less than 50 Protestants, without Church or Glebe House ; as also an average stipend of £65. per parish for those in which there are less than 50 Protestants, but having either a Church or Glebe House, the surplus, as above stated, will arise in each diocese from and ter the cessation of existing interests.

I think that the mere statement of facts contained in these enumerations must make an impression beyond the compass of any declamation to reach ; and that all the arts of diction cannot come up to this bare arithmetic.

It will be remembered that, in the debates on the Church Temporalities' Act, we heard much of the expansive force of Protestantism, and I am glad so far to find, in the shape of corroboration to that expression, that the Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction states the numbers of many of the Protestant and Church of England congregations in Ireland to be on the increase.

We have not been inattentive to this branch of the consideration, and we provide that, if, at any subsequent time, the number of members of the Established Church should increase in such a manner as that the arrangements adopted under this Act should be found, in the judgment of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, inadequate to the spiritual wants of the Parish, they are specially to report the circumstances to the Lord Lieutenant in Council, and to submit at the same time the proposition which they may think called for by the circumstances of the case. If the Lord Lieutenant in Council should approve of this Report and Proposition, they are to be laid before Parliament ; and, after the expiration of six months from that period, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners may carry their proposition into effect, unless Parliament shall have otherwise directed.

I believe that the Bill only contains, further, two or three clauses for the purpose of amending, filling up, and extending, some portions of the Church Temporalities Act, but as they are only framed with the view to act in the obvious spirit, and fulfil the evident intentions, of this Act, I need hardly enter into any detail of them at present; they mainly provide that the property of Minor Canons and Vicars Choral should be vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, subject to provisions for existing interests, and the discharge of actual duties. The Tithes disappropriated from Dignities in case of Vicarages, or other Cures, being specially endowed, may be carried to the general account of the same Commissioners; and the tenants of Bishops, instead of paying down the purchase-money for Perpetuities, may give a Mortgage, at a reduced interest, payable within a limited period. I ought, perhaps, to add, that any additional sums arising out of these provisions, being subsidiary to the operation of the Church Temporalities Act, will, conformably with the principle to which I before adverted, be applied to the General Fund under the administration of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the purposes of that Act.

I have now gone through the main provisions of the measure which I have the honour to submit to the House. It comprises many heads; it covers much ground; it touches important principles; and, therefore, I know that in its progress it must expect to encounter many assailants, perhaps from many quarters.

I believe the settlement of the Tithe Question to be as indispensable to a suffering Clergy, as I think a fresh appropriation is called for by a superabundant Establishment; and, therefore, I think the Bill rightly and fairly connects and couples them together. I also am pleased to think that while the Bill does not shrink from grappling openly and boldly with the question of Appropriation—while it assails all Sinecures, in spite of any prescriptions, I believe, in my conscience, that its tendency will be to give to Protestants themselves—to that very Church, which it may probably be represented merely as an attempt to rob, defraud, and pillage, sources of strength and vitality which have been long dried up before: and it is hardly fanciful to hope, that in many Parishes where the untended flock has hitherto been unconscious of the ministrations, and even of the existence, of their Pluralist or Absentee Incumbent, it may, for the first time, cause “the sound of a church-going bell” to be heard. Such advantages however, invaluable as they would be in my eyes, I admit to be almost incidental to the main object of the measure, which is, that when you are calling upon the country to ratify and secure, at considerable cost and sacrifice, the future maintenance of a Church Establishment, which alone ought to exist on the plea of the national good, you are called upon to give to it that decent conformity with the tenure of its existence, and with the extent of its duties, as may render it an object of unforced esteem, and respectful for-

bearance, instead of an unfailing source of contemptuous reproach, and angry resistance. If the proposition I am now making is calculated, in the slightest degree, to operate against the interests of Truth and real Religion, no one more heartily desires its failure. It is with the most confident wishes for its success that I now move for “leave to bring in a Bill for the better Regulation of Ecclesiastical Revenues, and the promotion of Religious and Moral Education in Ireland.”

THE END.

PROSPECTUS.

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“ In primisque hominis est propria veri inquisitio atque investigatio.”

CICERO DE OFF.

It is commonly said, that charity begins at home. Might we not add, that it too frequently ends there? With nations and individuals, domestic interests are apt to absorb those affections, the influence of which might be extended beneficially, without injury to the rights of those who from nature have the first claim upon them. If we consider that the blessings of charity are upon him that gives, as well as upon him that receives; that the good which is done to others returns upon its author in a thousand ways; we shall find even the selfish passions enlisted on the side of enlarged beneficence. However true this observation, it is yet seldom that nations are sensible of its advantages. Selfishness, condemned in individuals, has been considered the privilege of communities; restrictions upon commerce have been thought the most effectual means of acquiring national wealth; and free institutions at home have been held to be best protected by crushing every germ of liberty abroad.

Indifference to the condition of every nation but their own, has been the peculiar reproach of Englishmen. To amass riches and to enjoy them, have been said to be the occupation of their lives. Our exertions are about to be directed to calling the attention of the Public to the close

connexion which exists between the progress of social and intellectual improvement in England and in other countries.

A work, conducted upon this plan, seems, at the present moment, to be particularly required. The periodical meetings of men of science in the different capitals and large towns of Europe, indisputably show, that there is a general desire to be acquainted with scientific discoveries. The human mind begins to be impatient of the trammels, which narrow policy, or ignorant prejudice, had imposed upon it. What reason can be assigned that the division of labour should not produce as important results in speculative science, as in the mechanical arts? It is our good fortune to live at a time, when the anxiety for useful reform is unbounded. We earnestly hope that our efforts for its gratification may not be entirely fruitless.

The literature of our own country is, we believe, acknowledged to be at a low ebb. No poetical work of the first order issues from the press. History is very little cultivated, and Philosophy seems to be neglected. Cheap publications for elementary education abound, composed with a skill that is admirably adapted for its great and useful purpose. Essays on ephemeral subjects, and Novels, certainly well written, but of temporary interest, have filled the place of works calculated to instruct the mind in solid truths, and elevate the feelings above the passions and interests of the moment. Much as this is to be regretted, the remedy is not easily suggested. While the mind continues to be agitated by the hope or fear of great changes, it will not readily subside into a temper suited to philosophical inquiry, or to the calm enjoyment of intellectual occupations. We are, however, not discouraged by the prevalent inclination for the agitating topics of the day, since we shall have ample opportunities of ministering to that taste in our Review of foreign and domestic politics.

Throughout Europe, an anxious struggle is going on between liberal and anti-liberal opinions, or, if we may so describe it, between the voluntary and compulsory principle of Government. After what we have already expressed, it is scarcely necessary for us to declare our warm attachment to the former. We should be glad to see England take a more generous view of the contest, which is shaking the throne of the despot, and

encouraging the hopes of every sincere lover of freedom. Her insular position cannot now, as formerly, protect her from foreign interference. The power of steam has thrown a bridge over the channel, which separates her from the continent—a bridge which no storm can scatter. Her liberty can no longer exist alone. If sympathy with others be wanting, self-defence should awaken her to the necessity of taking unequivocally one side or the other, in a contention of principle, where the crisis is not only inevitable, but fast approaching.

The Conductors of the *British and Foreign Review* do not disguise their anxiety to see the restoration of Poland to an independent place among the nations of Europe. Nor is this desire founded solely on motives of humanity and justice. They consider, that upon her reinstatement may depend the issue of the question, whether England and the Western States of Europe shall remain in undisturbed possession of their free institutions, and be able to improve them in tranquillity; or, shall be continually exposed to degrading and jealous interruptions from powers less civilized than themselves, who fear that the example of reform, if successful, may not be lost upon their own subjects. Russia seems to be the last hold of conservatism in Europe, to which all anti-reformers turn their eyes for succour in their distress. Against her encroachments, Poland would be an impassable barrier. It is as friends of freedom, no less than of humanity, that the conductors of this *Review* desire to see the spoliation of Poland avenged, and the example of justice, though tardy, substituted for that of unpunished crime.

But in this work Poland shall have her place, and no more. Her cause shall have its share, and no more than its share, of the attention which every European Journal, conducted upon honest and liberal principles, must bestow upon the most oppressed nation of the world. Our object is truth—our motive charity; and we trust that over our conduct, as reasoners and as critics, fairness and candour will be found to preside, without fettering the freedom of inquiry, or narrowing the province of just censure. Those who are opposed to us in politics, shall be treated with tolerance and respect; whilst in literature and science, our arguments shall be advanced with the caution becoming men who are in search of truth, and be studiously stripped of the arrogance which denotes the propagandist.

We are still painfully aware, how difficult may be the task of engaging the public mind in the investigation of anything, considered to be of so uncertain attainment, as truth. We are, however, inclined to believe that this uncertainty may be over-rated. Some one has said, that there is a question often put, and never answered, "What is truth?" But Lord Bacon observes, that it was put "by jesting Pilate, who would not stay "for an answer." His conclusion seems to be correct, for truth may generally be found, if honestly and industriously pursued. But if the path to her abode be choked up by party animosities and pedantic jealousies; if the light of reason be neglected; if vanity beguile, if impatience entangle, or ignorance weigh us down in the investigation; ought we to complain, or be surprised, if we miss that reward, which never was sincerely sought, and fail of attaining the end, for which we had not provided ourselves with the means?

It only remains for the conductors of the British and Foreign Review, to entreat from the public its kind indulgence towards their future labours. In their politics, they will be found the zealous and steady advocates of peace, when it can be maintained consistently with the national safety and honour: but should they be compelled to choose between the alternatives, they will not hesitate to express their preference of a just and honourable war, to a precarious or disgraceful repose. In their criticisms and discussions, they will be anxious to avoid giving personal offence. They will ask assistance from the wise and the learned, and spare no exertions to provide for their readers useful and agreeable entertainment.

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